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WARSAW PACT MILITARY STRATEGY: A COMPROMISE IN SOVIET STRATEGIC THINKING

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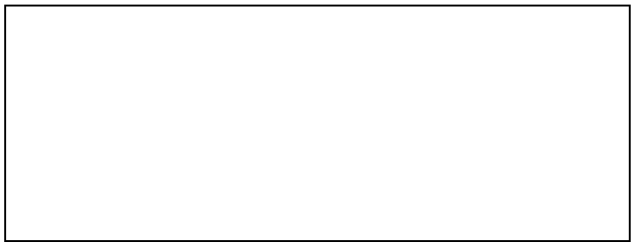

WARSAW PACT MILITARY STRATEGY:
A COMPROMISE IN SOVIET STRATEGIC THINKING

This working paper of the DD/I Research Staff explores the development of Warsaw Pact military strategy. The thesis of this study is that the internal Soviet debate on the nature of a war in Europe has had a significant effect on the development of the missions and force structure of the East European armies.

The author has benefited much from discussion of the thesis with colleagues in ORR and OCI. The author alone, however, is responsible for the paper's conclusions, which are controversial.

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Summary and Conclusions

Ten years ago a Warsaw Pact doctrine was, in any meaningful military sense, nonexistent. The requirements for warfare in the European theater and thinking on the conduct of a war in Europe were at that time based essentially on Soviet resources. Today Warsaw Pact military doctrine calls for a highly integrated and coordinated series of Soviet-East European offensive and defensive operations. The offensive operations encompass a well-defined combined arms mission on the part of the East Europeans, who act both as fillers for Soviet units and as national components assigned invasion tasks under Soviet front command. The defensive operations encompass a highly-integrated early warning and air defense network and a well-coordinated logistic support system.

The development of Warsaw Pact policy has not paralleled the development of NATO missions and force structures. The initial and almost exclusive assignment of a defensive mission to the non-Soviet pact forces remained the basis of pact policy for the first half of the alliance's history. The belated inclusion of substantial non-Soviet forces in Moscow's European invasion plans was somewhat coincident with certain Western military moves during the 1961 Berlin crisis. However, there are signs that competing interests within the Soviet Union--rather than the Western "threat" exclusively--were responsible for the assignment of an offensive mission to the East European forces.

The competing interests were reflected in the debate within the Soviet Union over the role of land forces in a European war. This debate has had important implications for the missions and force structure of the East European armies. The modernist school of thought, advanced by Khrushchev after the ouster of Zhukov in 1957, called for the saturation of nuclear strikes on Western Europe and left little room for

of allied offensive forces under tight Soviet control. And in the fall of 1961, the first announced pact meeting exclusively devoted to military matters was held (8-9 September Defense Ministers Meeting in Warsaw), the first joint pact exercises commenced (announced by Moscow on 25 September), and modern Soviet combined arms equipment sent to the East European armies increased in quantity and quality. To the extent that the mass army was a traditionalist theme, overall control over the million-plus East European forces appears to have been one aspect of the Soviet military's part of the bargain in the 1961 "compromise" to prevent a larger scale Soviet mobilization than that which took place. Another aspect of the military's part of the deal was, of course, the acceptance of the view that a land war in Europe would be fought under nuclear conditions. And in order to conduct the land operation under a nuclear exchange--which conceivably could block the road and rail reinforcement effort from the Soviet Union--allied forces may have acquired an increased value to the marshals as planned replacements for weakened Soviet units. A third aspect; the targeting of strengthened East European units against the West might draw some NATO fire away from Soviet units.

Nevertheless, the traditionalists were less than enthusiastic over the compromise, remained silent on the military reliability of the allied forces, and argued that the requirements for warfare should come essentially from Soviet resources. Khrushchev himself may have entertained doubt over the long-range political wisdom of equipping the allied forces with modern offensive weaponry and over the long-range effect the 1961 panacea would have on his military views. In fact, Khrushchev's earlier school of thought was reemphasized in Soviet media in 1962.

Khrushchev's general strategic views faced a second setback following the failure of the Cuban missile venture. The debate on the role of land forces in Europe was renewed, but this time both schools of thought turned to the 1961 compromise in support of various aspects of their arguments. The traditionalists pointed to the new offensive role of the non-Soviet forces in support of their combined arms school of thought. The modernists appeared to suggest that Soviet forces could be cut due to the increased capabilities of the East

European forces. Thus in December 1963 and again in February 1964, allied armed forces were for the first time directly brought into the context of a Soviet troop and budget cut formula by Khrushchev.

It appeared that the modernists were (temporarily at least) prepared to tolerate an inconsistent military strategy provided that substantial amounts of men and equipment could be derived from non-Soviet resources. However, one post-Cuba crisis development--the worsening of incidents along the Sino-Soviet border--served to obscure somewhat the differences between the two schools of thought. The strengthening of the Soviet border with the CPR related to pact strategy in the sense that the improvement in the East European national forces would provide the Soviets with the strategic flexibility to redeploy, if necessary, some of their forces stationed in East Europe to the Far East (to meet a large scale Chinese border incident) without jeopardizing Soviet security on their Western frontier.

Under the new Kremlin leadership, problems engendered by the compromise continue to be in evidence. On the one hand, the role of land forces in a nuclear war remains a controversial issue in the USSR, and thus places in doubt the long-range missions and force structure of the non-Soviet armies, and the Soviet forces stationed in East Europe as well. And on the other hand, certain indications of an elevated status for the pact have emerged and the East European military modernization program has continued. In effect, the assignment of an offensive mission to the East European forces, which initially seemed to bear the trappings of a temporary panacea, has apparently given way to a pact modernization effort of a more permanent nature. Recently the modernization trend has been accompanied by signs of a growing East European voice in pact policy-making--heretofore an almost exclusive Soviet prerogative. Should the new Soviet leadership fail to bring forward a comprehensive military policy, today's well-armed East European nations may well have the opportunity to shape pact strategy in the future--and thus convert the pact into a conventional military alliance.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PACT STRATEGY

The growth of two separate missions appears in the development of pact military policy. The earlier, defensive aspects of current pact strategy appear as a direct outgrowth of the national interests of the individual Warsaw Pact nations. The latter, offensive aspects of current pact strategy, however, owe more to competing interests within the Soviet Union than to intra-pact developments. We first outline the development of the defensive mission.

I. The Defensive Mission

When established in 1955, the Warsaw Pact was little more than a propaganda countermeasure to the inclusion of West Germany in the Western alliance. Soviet military thinking as reflected by available statements and forces-in-being gave little, if any, consideration to the offensive utilization of Moscow's poorly-equipped allied forces in an invasion of Western Europe. (While each ally reportedly received a military training mission in 1955 led by a senior Soviet general, apparently little attention was given to coordinating Soviet-East European offensive exercises. An early 1961 article [redacted] Military Thought journal, which we discuss later, indicated that virtually no efforts had been given by Moscow to the utilization of Warsaw Pact allies in joint offensive operations.) The tactical command machinery of the pact was cumbersome, particularly in light of the demands of modern warfare, and betrayed the prevailing Soviet view that

the allied forces would have little military significance vis-a-vis the West.*

While the East European offensive role appears to have been initially neglected, sightings in the mid-1950's of what was then modern Soviet defensive equipment in the allied forces (such as advanced radar and all-weather MIG-17 interceptors**) suggest that Moscow had not completely ignored a meaningful military role for non-Soviet troops in the Warsaw alliance. In fact, a Soviet-East European early warning and air defense capability appears to have been called for by Moscow early in the pact's history (and in certain countries, prior to 1955). The dual defensive missions were compatible with the national interests of the East European nations (defense of their own territory), vital to Soviet national interests (early warning of a bomber attack from Western Europe and northern Africa), and instrumental in providing a meaningful vehicle to further the image of common goals in the newly founded alliance.

*The pact's armed organization, the Joint Command, as originally drafted in the 1955 treaty consisted of a commander-in-chief (who has been a Soviet officer since the inception of the pact) aided by the defense ministers or other commanders of the individual member states who act as deputies. The "pact deputies" were to retain full competence for all the national troops that were assigned to the Joint Command. Sometime in late 1961, or early 1962, a streamlined "wartime" pact command organization appears to have been set up. More on this later.

**In the main, when air defense technology became available in the Soviet Union, satellite national forces received the Soviet improvements in the same time period. As we point out later, this was not the case with modern Soviet offensive weaponry.

The dual missions also represented a clear requirement not only under the views of the professional Soviet military but also under Khrushchev's developing concepts of a war in Europe. Khrushchev's strategic concepts regarding a European war (and thus the role of the pact) began to emerge in the months following his successful showdown with Marshal Zhukov in late 1957. Elements in Khrushchev's image of a future war (which, as we discuss later, were more clearly generalized in his January 1960 Supreme Soviet speech) were present in his 24 May 1958 speech at a Moscow meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the pact, the first such meeting following Zhukov's ouster. In unusually graphic terms for the time, Khrushchev described the devastating consequences of the use of nuclear weapons--not conventional forces--in a future war:

> Wars between states have always brought grave disasters upon the peoples. But a future war, if the aggressors succeed in unleashing it, threatens to become the most devastating war in the history of mankind, because there is no guarantee that it will not become a nuclear war with all its catastrophic consequences. Millions of people would perish, great cities and industrial centers would be razed from the face of the earth, unique cultural relics created by mankind through the ages would be irrevocably destroyed in the conflagration of such a war and vast territories poisoned with radio-active fallout.

And that Khrushchev considered that nuclear weapons would be employed in the initial stages of the war was made implicit in his criticism of alleged Western policy. In scoring what he cited as official NATO strategy--"in case of a 'Russian aggression' the NATO armed forces were ready to use atomic weapons first"--Khrushchev publicly stated for the first time that NATO policy might oblige the Warsaw Pact members to consider the question of stationing rocket weapons in East Germany, Poland and

Czechoslovakia. [redacted] Khrushchev had made a similar statement, but without mentioning specific countries, to [redacted] a few days after Zhukov's ouster.) The strategic implication of Khrushchev's reference to the need for countermeasures to "NATO policy" appears to have been that the initial stage of a future war would most likely involve the exchange of nuclear strikes. Khrushchev did not go on (as he did in 1960) to state flatly that conventional forces under nuclear conditions had lost their former importance. But he did take the occasion at the May 1958 meeting to reiterate the January 1958 Soviet troop cut and redeployment announcements* and the other Warsaw Pact troop cuts as an example of the bloc's "peaceful intentions"--not as an example of meeting military realities, as he would spell out in 1960.

The role that non-Soviet forces could play in the pact under the new Soviet image of a war in Europe may have been suggested in Khrushchev's sober reference to the capabilities of the U.S. strategic bomber force and the threat of nearby U.S. bases. In this context Khrushchev in his May 1958 speech boasted that "the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw treaty countries can have and do have everything necessary to keep themselves out of

*TASS announced in January 1958 that the Soviet Army, Navy and Air Force would be cut by 300,000 men; 41,000 men would be withdrawn from East Germany and 17,000 from Hungary. The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Rumania was announced at the meeting, and pact commander Konev announced the resolve of East European nations to reduce conventional forces by 119,000 men. (In 1960 Moscow reported that over one quarter million allied armed forces personnel cuts had been made since 1955.) An 11 May 1965 TASS report of an interview with pact staff chief Batov claimed that the pact countries "between 1955 and 1958 reduced unilaterally the numerical strength of their armed forces by 2,477,000 men"--a figure about six times greater than the one given by Moscow in 1958.

a strategically disadvantageous position." The fact that the pact was in such a position and that East European forces were openly included in Soviet strategic thinking on the Western bomber threat suggests that active allied participation in a more highly effective air defense system was regarded as an exigency under Khrushchev's view of a war in Europe.

We do not know precisely when the decision was taken to equip the East European armies with more advanced air defense hardware such as surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) and missile-equipped all-weather jet interceptors (MIG-19s), but available evidence points to the latter half of 1958 or the first half of 1959. has reported that some time prior to 1960 the presidium of the Soviet Central Committee "in consultation with political leaders of the Warsaw Pact" decided to equip the East European forces with surface-to-air missiles.* The last pact political consultative conference prior to 1960 was the May 1958 Moscow meeting, but the stated that the pact's "political leaders" participated in the decision during "unpublicized visits to Moscow." has reported that East European officers were brought to the USSR for ground to air missile training in early 1959, and later in the year were sent back--along with SAMs, MIG-19s and Soviet

reported that prior to 1960 allied officers were instructed in tactical ground-to-ground missiles. This clearly suggests that more than an anti-air defense role for the East Europeans was being considered by Moscow. However, the first observation of such an "offensive" weapon actually in East European forces did not take place until mid-1962--i.e., after Khrushchev's 1961 concessions to his traditionalist minded marshals (more on this later). informed us that Soviet instruction on ground-to-ground missiles in 1959 was limited to a cursory introduction of general principles and only select Soviet officers were given instruction in firing such missiles.

instructors--to train national forces. (The first SAM site manned by allied troops was observed in June 1960.)

By late 1959, Khrushchev had developed his earlier views on the nature and conduct of a future war in Europe, and he placed his particular image of the conflict before the Supreme Soviet on 14 January 1960. He held that the character of a future war between the great powers would be rocket-nuclear, and that the decisive results would take place in the first minutes of the conflict. Therefore, the offensive and defensive branches of the armed forces involved in the initial exchange were the critical forces, and that the surface navy, the tactical air force and the ground forces "had lost their previous importance" and could be cut by one-third. Khrushchev did not list enemy armed forces as a target in the initial phase of the war; presumably he felt that such forces would be consumed along with the rest of continental Europe. As for pact strategy, Khrushchev's considerations relating to a European war virtually ruled out the participation of non-Soviet forces in any significant role but that of air defense.

The operational implications of Khrushchev's strategic pronouncements were spelled out in the first issue of Military Thought which appeared in early 1960. The scenario as presented in the publication portrayed the virtual liquidation of Europe in which a limited number of Soviet conventional forces--other Warsaw Pact forces were ignored--were called upon for secondary mop-up tasks. The saturation of nuclear strikes (as called for in Khrushchev's strategy) left little room for a conventional land battle in Europe, and thus no necessity to coordinate conventional offensive operations with Moscow's East European allies.

In public the professional military endorsed Khrushchev's strategic views. the "traditionalists"

(including general staff chief Sokolovsky and, probably, pact commander Konev, who were replaced in 1960) vigorously counterattacked the operational implications of Khrushchev's strategy. The principal argument was that a land battle would be fought in Europe in which mass Soviet armies would be necessary. A few traditionalists argued that not only the non-strategic Soviet forces but the allied forces would be called upon. And in the Soviet debate, the utilization of pact allied forces was broached in the first rebuttal of the modernist conception of a war in Europe. General Kurochkin, in roundly criticizing the operational implications of the modernists' strategic views of conducting a war, wrote

> In the determination of the degree of reaction it is necessary to consider that nuclear-missile weapons must be used in a decisive and purposeful way, but only within the limits of expedience. The forsaking of this requirement can lead to a situation wherein a war unleashed by aggressors will involve such large human and material losses on both sides that the consequences may be catastrophic for mankind.
>
> In one case it may be necessary to conduct operations for the complete destruction of the means of retaliation, and in another--to destroy the strategic nuclear weapons bases. It is clear that in a strategic situation of this type it may be possible to find a place for the utilization of the other branches of the armed forces of the Soviet Union, and of the forces of other countries of the Socialist camp. (emphasis supplied)

Kurochkin did not explicitly state the "place" to be found or the "branch" to be employed by the allied forces. He

went on to argue that "in some cases and in some directions, the primary role will belong to the ground forces equipped with nuclear-missile weapons"--which at that time would have excluded non-Soviet ground forces, unless such forces were to act as fillers for Soviet units.

The traditionalists' near silence on the matter of using allied conventional forces seems to have been due to the fact that in building a case for the allies, the arguments for greater Soviet conventional forces might not be correspondingly strengthened. In fact, when the modernist policy--particularly as it related to the European military theaters--was faced with a reversal in 1961, Khrushchev turned to the allied conventional forces in an effort to hold down the "metal eaters" in the Soviet high command.

II. The Offensive Mission

The 1961 Berlin Crisis Compromise: When Khrushchev decided in late 1960 or early 1961 to try to intimidate the West into making concessions on Berlin and Germany, he was soon faced by a coalition of his leading officers who countered that reliance on rocket-nuclear weapons alone would jeopardize Soviet security. The Soviet marshals (and particularly Malinovsky and Grechko*) appealed,

*Malinovsky's criticism was made implicit in his 22nd Party Congress speech in which he called for multi-million man army while failing to draw a U.S.-USSR military strength comparison. (Khrushchev had emphasized Soviet military superiority throughout the year.)

Grechko was motivated by dissatisfaction with Khrushchev's intention to reduce the size of the army, and he felt so strongly about this that he threatened to retire, whatever the consequences, stating that it was ridiculous to depend on nuclear-missile weapons alone.

arguing that the Soviet conventional forces were not at an adequate level of combat preparedness for a showdown over Berlin and that the 1960 troop and budget proposal should be suspended. And in early 1961 the traditionalists views in the debate began to appear in open Soviet media. As the 1961 crisis progressed--and as the U.S. vigorously reacted by sharply increasing the military budget for strategic and conventional weaponry, extending tours of duty, increasing draft quotas and mobilizing a substantial number of reservists--the Soviet marshals advanced their particular strategic views in calling for massive Soviet conventional forces to fight a land war in Europe. In short, Khrushchev's 1960 strategic considerations were on the brink of being overturned by the professional military.

Khrushchev at the same time seems to have been searching for a method to salvage the principal attributes of his strategic considerations and thus mitigate the efforts of his military professionals. One such temporary panacea was presented by a Major General A. Klyukanov

Klyukanov's discussion made it clear that there had been little serious consideration given by the Soviet military to the use of allied forces in joint operations. He wrote that "unfortunately" Soviet-East European military coordination "is not shared even with a limited number of generals and senior officers of the Soviet troops deployed in the border military districts who, in case of war, must personally direct combat operations of their troops in coordination with the troops on or from the territory of the countries of the Socialist Camp."

In retrospect, a proposal somewhat like Klyukanov's seems to underlie much of the decision to commence the

first joint military exercises in the fall of 1961.* And the concept of joint training appears to have provided Khrushchev with a temporary counterporposal in an effort to hold down the numerical strength of the Soviet conventional forces, or at least to prevent a larger Soviet mobilization on the scale envisaged by Malinovsky in his October 1961 plea for "mass, multimillion-strong armed forces" for the conduct of a future war. Increased reliance on non-Soviet forces would not only ease the

*It is interesting to note that a Major General A. Klyukanov was identified in 1961 as a member of the Third Shock Army, Group of Soviet Forces Germany (GSFG) --an area included in the first joint pact exercises carried out in the fall of that year.

strains of suspending the 1960 Soviet troop cut proposal, but would also pass on to East European military budgets part of the cost of modern combined arms equipment.*

That Khrushchev was less than enthusiastic about reversing his earlier troop and budget cut policies was made painfully evident in his 8 July 1961 speech to military graduates in which he announced the suspension of the January 1960 troop cut proposal and the increased appropriations for defense. He emphatically explained that the measures were "temporary," that they were responsive in nature, and that they would be promptly rescinded upon receipt of evidence that the U.S. was willing to relax tensions. In the same speech, Khrushchev also mentioned the allied contribution to the strength of the pact: "It is admitted in the West that the strength of the Soviet Union and the other socialist states is not inferior to the forces of the Western powers." While Khrushchev's brief reference falls short of indicating a policy of tapping allied resources to ease Soviet mobilization strains, it does indicate that Khrushchev in July 1961 regarded the military strength of "other socialist countries" as a meaningful factor in the East-West balance of forces. Less than four months earlier, the 29 March communique of the pact Political Consultative Committee (meeting in Moscow) stated that "the nations participating in the Warsaw Treaty, during the course of a thorough exchange of opinion, coordinated measures which they consider necessary to implement in the interest of future strengthening their defensive capabilities." And less than four months after his July "reversal," Khrushchev in his 27 October speech at the 22nd Party Congress claimed that "the Soviet Union and

*Soviet combined-arms equipment sent to the allied armies increased not only in quantity but also in quality following the 1961 Berlin crisis. For a good discussion of the modernization of the allied armies, see [redacted]

the countries of the socialist camp are now even stronger compared to the imperialists."

In contrast, Malinovsky in his 23 October speech at the congress made no claims to military superiority or even equality with the "imperialists." And even though Malinovsky noted that joint pact exercises had been held in 1961, he advanced no evaluation of the East European armies' new participation in the realm of offensive military operations. This suggests that Malinovsky viewed the effectiveness of the East European armies in a somewhat different light than had Khrushchev, and that the requirements of warfare in Europe had to be met from Soviet resources.

While Malinovsky may have been reflecting concern over the reliability of the East European armies, Khrushchev himself may have had second thoughts about the political wisdom of equipping the satellite forces with modern offensive weaponry. Khrushchev's subsequent return to his former strategic views suggests not only that his 1961 gestures in favor of Soviet conventional strategy were tactical ones, but that his acceptance of an East European conventional reequipment policy might have been less than enthusiastic. And in 1962 comparatively short shrift was given to non-Soviet military contributions by Khrushchev, who was again engaged in another effort to intimidate the U.S. into concessions --this time by installing offensive missiles in Cuba. Khrushchev's initial concern (if in fact he had had any) over the 1961 pact modernization program may have stemmed not only from his strong strategic views but also from political considerations such as the possibility of further exacerbating East European national sentiment by the creation of strong national offensive forces.

The remedy for such a political trend was, of course, tighter pact military integration and subordination to the Soviet defense ministry. And to the extent that "mass, multi-million man armies" was the theme of the traditionalists, it is possible that tighter control over the million-plus East European forces may have been at least one aspect of the Soviet military's part of the bargain

in the 1961 compromise. At any rate, in 1962 indications of greater Soviet control of allied offensive forces began to emerge. In contrast to General Klyukanov's early 1961 suggestion (cited earlier) for greater coordination with allied troops,

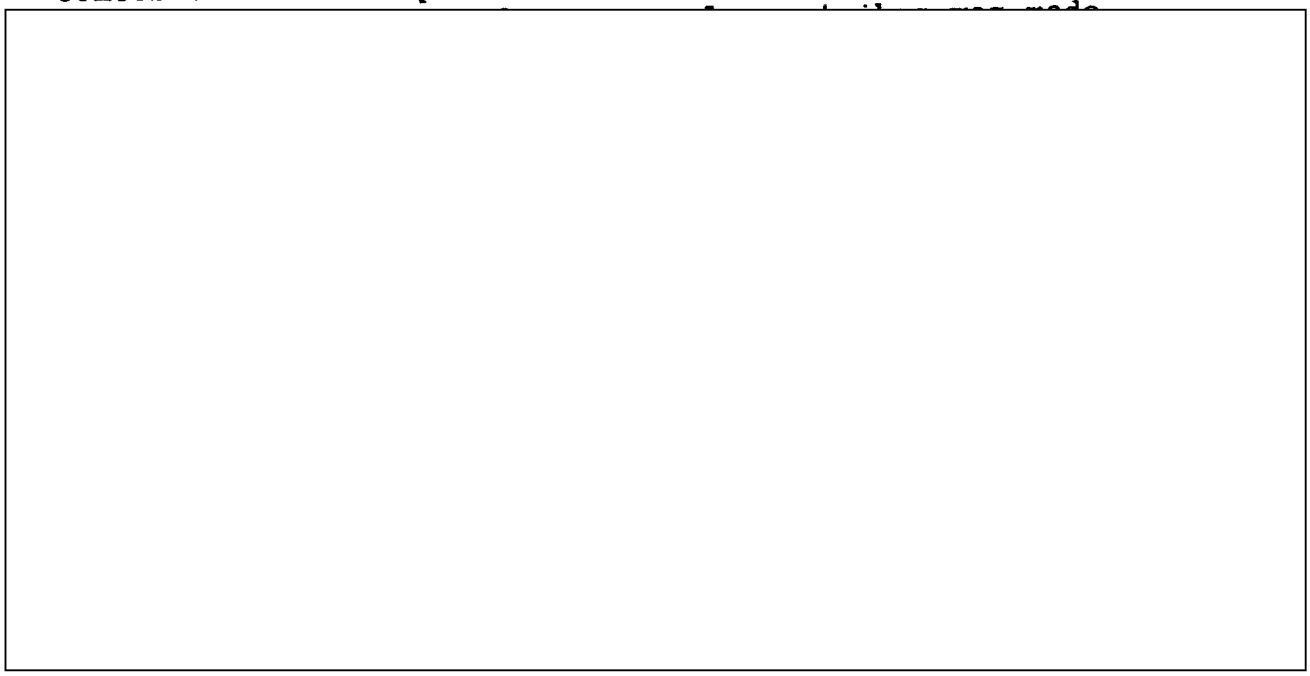
The Soviet author, a Colonel V. Zemskov, stated that:

> at the start of a war it is necessary to eliminate dual control of allied armies (by the front commander and the military leadership of the allied countries). The armies should receive combat tasks only from the front commander.

The "wartime" command of the pact forces as presented in the Zemskov and Sokolovsky formula is, of course, in sharp contrast to the "peacetime" chain of command as officially proclaimed in the 1955 Warsaw Treaty and in

subsequent official statements on pact organization. The Soviet Supreme High Command would control not only the strategic direction of the war, but certain individual wartime combat operations (such as reassignment of tactical missions) and, presumably, the peacetime joint military exercises.

Another aspect of the Soviet military's part of the bargain in the 1961 compromise was, of course, tacit acceptance of the traditionalist view of the need for mass armies in Europe under nuclear conditions. And the modernization of allied offensive forces relates to the traditionalist view in the sense that strengthened pact forces could be regarded by the Soviet marshals as vital to the success of the Soviet invasion--particularly if Western strikes blocked the road and rail reinforcement effort from the Soviet Union. In short, satellite forces would be of greater value as planned replacements for weakened Soviet units if the former were equipped with modern combined arms equipment. That the Soviets were concerned with the problem of isolation between the front



The question of East European military reliability has probably concerned the marshal (and the Kremlin leaders as well) from the time the decision was finally taken to target non-Soviet forces against NATO up to the present time. The marshals, however, could have regarded the reliability issue in a somewhat different light owing to the realities of nuclear war in Europe. That is, the modernized pact forces possess a standing value to Moscow by the fact that non-Soviet advancing forces could draw some NATO fire from advancing Soviet units. The direction of the advancing non-Soviet forces was probably another consideration affecting Moscow's view of East European military reliability--e.g., would the Czech forces fight more vigorously their traditional enemy (Germans) than other enemy groupings? This rationale may, in part, underlie the Sokolovsky author's explanation that Soviet control of operations in the European theaters does not mean that all East European national forces will act as "fillers" for Soviet units.

> in some military theaters, operational units of the allied countries will be under their own supreme high command. In such cases, these units can be commanded according to joint concepts and plans of operations, and by close coordination of troop operations through representatives of these countries.

The "operational units of the allied countries...under their own supreme high command"--rather than the East European units specifically assigned to the Warsaw Pact Joint Command--generally are assigned home defense and supply missions by the East European national defense ministries. Certain terrain considerations, however, may in some cases serve to obscure the differences between the two types of allied forces. Political considerations may also play a part in the allocation of semi-independent combat tasks. At any rate the assignment of some independent missions to the allied commands seems to reflect the same rationale taken in the earlier period of the pact for air defense responsibilities.

That is, Soviet planners appear to have capitalized on certain individual East European national interests (in addition to certain terrain considerations) to maximize their separate missions in the attack, while retaining the Soviet claim to over-all direction of the operation. While avoiding a description of "who will attack whom," this characteristic approach was obliquely referred to in a Nedelya article by Colonel General S. Shtemenko (issue six, 31 January-6 February 1965) after a discussion of "combat tasks":

> It must be noted that Soviet military doctrine is of a truly international nature and is in keeping with the basic interests of all socialist countries including those united by the Warsaw Pact. It bears in mind the necessity to preserve in each socialist country the respective country's national peculiarities in military development, a fact which strengthens the military alliance of the socialist states.

The Post-Cuba Crisis Debate: Khrushchev's military views suffered a second major setback following his failure to rapidly redress the strategic equation by installing medium-and-long-range missiles in Cuba. And, as in the days of the 1961 Berlin crisis, the Soviet military reaction reflected a strong bias in favor of conventional forces. But the distinguishing element in the renewed strategic debate was that now both schools of thought turned to the "compromise" in direct support of various aspects of their arguments.

For example, Khrushchev in his February election speech renewed his earlier line on Soviet and allied contributions to pact military superiority. At the same time he lamented the burdensome cost of keeping Soviet military capabilities from falling behind those of the West and reiterated his earlier views on the nature of nuclear war. It appeared particularly curious that Khrushchev would refer to Soviet and allied military

superiority, then complain about the vast amout of resources allocated to the Soviet armed forces, and then conclude with the implication that a nuclear war would be decisively settled before large armies could perform any significant mission. An explanation may be that at this time Khrushchev's attention was directed toward (1) blocking the efforts of those who were attempting to convert his temporary 1961 concessions to conventional strategy into a full reversal, and (2) renewing his 1960 effort to reduce the numerical strength of the armed forces and cut the military budget.

In early spring 1963 Khrushchev turned his emphasis on allied capabilities in another effort to head off a renewed campaign from the traditionalists in the Soviet high command.* But this time his efforts were not carried out in a crisis atmosphere. Thus, while Khrushchev pursued his 1963 policy of detente with the West (limited test ban treaty, ban on orbiting nuclear weapons, etc.), East European military efforts were receiving emphasis in the Soviet propaganda media. The detente policy reached a high with the signing of the limited test ban treaty in August, and the campaign to direct attention to allied efforts hit an all-time high in the unprecedented amount of bloc propaganda that was devoted to a joint pact exercise--"Operation Quartet"--in September 1963. And finally in December 1963 Khrushchev returned to his military budget and manpower reduction proposal, this time armed with improved East European forces in one hand and a detente policy in the other. In his late 1963 approach, Khrushchev's

*We have found no explicit statement by Khrushchev or any other Soviet leader that Soviet forces could be cut due to the increased capabilities of the East European forces. Such an assessment, while probably sound, would be far from prudent for Moscow's line to the East Europeans in the sense that such an open assertion could unnecessarily hamper the military integration effort and contribute to the political and economic drift from Moscow.

view of the East-West balance of strength repeatedly included references to the contribution of the allied armies; in contrast, Warsaw Pact forces were not mentioned in Khrushchev's 1960 troop and budget cut formula.

14 January 1960 Khrushchev Supreme Soviet Speech.

The Council of Ministers puts before you for consideration and confirmation the proposal to reduce our armed forces by another 1.2 million men. If such a proposal is accepted by the Supreme Soviet, our army and navy will have a complement of 2,423,000 men. Thus the complement of our armed forces will be below the level proposed by the United States, Britain, and France during the discussion of the disarmament problem in 1956. These proposals envisaged for the Soviet Union and the United States armed forces at a level of 2.5 million men each.

We agreed to this proposal and have on our part advanced it many times, proceeding, of course, from the premise that this would be only the first step in the field of armed forces reduction. We mentioned these figures in particular in the proposals of the Soviet Government to the General Assembly in the autumn of 1956. More than three years

15 December 1963 Khrushchev CPSU Central Committee plenum speech.

When the question was raised of reducing the number of armed forces and armaments of the Soviet Union and its allies of the Warsaw Pact on the one side and the number of the armed forces and armaments of the large Western states and their NATO allies on the other, it was invariably pointed out to us that the Western powers cannot agree to any essential reduction of their armed forces and armaments, primarily because the Soviet Union and its allies possess a large preponderance precisely in the number of armed forces and conventional armaments.

At the same time, it was stated that in view of this the Western states must preserve and accumulate nuclear arms in order to balance the might of their armed forces with the might of the armed forces of the Warsaw Pact countries. This was said at

have passed since then, but agreement has not yet been achieved on this. A proposal is now being made to reduce the armed forces to a lower level, and we are doing this ourselves, without delays, without an unnecessary waste of time and energy, without the nervous strain connected with endless arguments with our partners on the question of disarmament.

the time when the Soviet Union was proposing--and we also propose this now--to agree that the strength of its armed forces be equal to the strength of the armed forces of the United States.

East European armed forces were again brought up by Khrushchev in the context of his 14 February 1964 CPSU Central Committee plenum remarks about the "measures we are taking to reduce defense expenditures" and the numerical strength of the Soviet forces:

> I should like to say a few words about the measures we are taking to reduce defense expenditures. The imperialist ideologists shout a lot about the Soviet Union's being allegedly forced to reduce armaments and armed forces because of difficulties in economic development. Attempts are also being made to advance a theory about the Soviet Union's being unable to develop its economy and strengthen its defense simultaneously, because it is unable to compete with capitalism successfully. All these are, naturally, fabrications. They show that the opponents of socialism are very worried by the tempestuous development of the Soviet Union and the socialist countries and by the fact that socialist countries have now created armed forces equal--as has been admitted by the leaders of the imperialist powers--to the forces of

the capitalist world. And we believe that our armed forces are more powerful. (emphasis supplied)

One conspicuous contrast with Khrushchev's 1960 effort followed in the wake of his latest budgetary proposals. Whereas in 1960 abundant propaganda support had been given to the manpower and budget cut proposal, Khrushchev's December 1963 and February 1964 proposals were given minimal attention in the Soviet media. (The leading Soviet marshals remained silent on the manpower reduction suggestion.) And open Soviet sources remained silent on the changes in and reported limited troop withdrawals from the GSFG in the summer of 1964.

The traditionalists in 1963 and 1964 made it clear that they did not accept Khrushchev's new rationale for the troop cut, and they argued with equal vigor that under the obtaining conditions (i.e., "wild men" in the U.S., fascists and revanchists in the FRG, etc.), "the Soviet Union and the peoples of the commonwealth of socialist nations are compelled to strengthen in every way the defense potential of the socialist camp, and to see to it that their armed forces are always kept in combat readiness capable of dealing retaliatory blows to any aggressor" (Marshal Rotmistrov, 20 February 1964 TASS interview on Armed Forces Day). Similarly, pact commander Grechko in his 8 July 1964 Kremlin speech argued that "it is necessary to strengthen even further the defensive power of the Soviet state and to see to it that, together with the armies of the other socialist countries, our armed forces are ready at any moment to deal a crushing repulse to the imperialist aggressors."

While apparently rejecting Khrushchev's evaluation of the allied contribution, certain leading marshals nevertheless regarded the strengthened allied armies as a point in favor of the combined arms school of thought. Pact commander Grechko made it clear that future war plans for the European theater would be drafted with scenarios outlining nuclear and conventional pact operations:

> The great importance of the joint exercises lies also in that they have been conductive to the further growth of combat might of our Joint Armed Forces, higher standards of military training, better coordination of task forces and staffs, elaboration of common views on nuclear and conventional warfare methods. (Grechko interview with a Novosti Press Agency correspondent, 27 February 1964 Novosti Supplement)

Soviet thinking on the possibility of conventional war in the European theater had received surprisingly little attention in [redacted] military discourse, although at first glance this would seem to be a logical argument for the Soviet traditionalists to emphasize. In the [redacted] 1960-62 debate, the traditionalists gave no indications that military operations in Europe could be carried out by conventional forces alone. And Grechko's brief remark (above) regarding pact conventional exercises did not reflect the scenarios of virtually every pact theater exercise--the theater force maneuvers have been almost exclusively nuclear-oriented. The nuclear orientation of the exercises, however, has called for restrained nuclear targeting--rather than a West European holocaust as called for in Khrushchev's school of thought--and for a force structure of high speed, maneuverable combined arms equipment to seize important targets. In short, pact planning has been based on both nuclear and conventional operations, rather than on one or the other, and thus combined operations are given the greatest attention.*

*The few Soviet military writers that have expressed preference for at least a non-nuclear stage in a European war have stopped short of explicitly asserting that such a war could remain non-nuclear.

One post-Cuba crisis development--the worsening of incidents along the Sino-Soviet border, at least until the time of Khrushchev's ouster--seemed to obscure somewhat the differences between the two schools of thought. Since the Cuban missile crisis, Soviet military writers have given some attention to the question of conventional operations (most frequently in comment on Western non-nuclear thinking), but they have generally failed to relate the size of the intended Soviet operations or, significantly, the particular theater of operations. And in addition to strengthening forces in East Europe, Soviet defenses along the Sino-Soviet border have been strengthened (with conventional equipment) since the Caribbean crisis. This development relates to Warsaw Pact strategy in the sense that the improvement in the East European national forces may permit a greater degree of Soviet flexibility, specifically relating to the possibility of a redeployment of some Soviet forces to the Far East (to meet a large scale Chinese border incident) without jeopardizing Soviet national interest on their Western frontier.* (Interestingly, though probably not directly related, increased Soviet attention on East European military capabilities roughly dates from the 1959-60 worsening of relations--including military relations--between Moscow and Peiping).

Pact Policy Under the New Soviet Leadership: The new Kremlin leadership, clearly aware of the bitter debate over military strategy during the Khrushchev years, has cautiously steered away from proclaiming a comprehensive Soviet military doctrine and thus a pact military strategy. However, one factor in Soviet military policy--the resource allocation issue--has not been completely avoided. Kosygin

— [redacted] the head of the Warsaw Pact was responsible for strengthening defenses along the Sino-Soviet border. Evidence of Soviet military activity on the border with the CPR was abundant in 1964, but we have no other indications linking Grechko with Sino-Soviet border defenses.

has identified himself with a 1965 military budget cut of 500 million rubles,* and Brezhnev has identified himself with a five-year 71 billion ruble agricultural program which might involve direct competition between the production of agricultural equipment (such as tractors) and conventional military weaponry (such as tanks). (However, Brezhnev's speech did not contain a word on defense.) The manpower issue has been indirectly noted; the service term for lower echelon military personnel with higher education has been sharply reduced, and decreased military manpower levels planned under Khrushchev have been claimed by one Soviet marshal.**

But with the exception of a few piece-meal moves into the resource allocation issue, the new leadership has not clearly addressed itself to questions of military strategy which directly relate to the European theater. Nevertheless, the nuclear crush versus the combined arms operation in Europe are still treated as a controversial issue by Soviet military spokesmen. While Khrushchev's views on the European nuclear war have not yet been championed by the new political leadership, the traditionalist views have been frequently restated by the military leadership, who have generally substituted the theme of "mass, multi-million armies" with appeals for high speed, maneuverable combined arms equipment capable of fighting a land war in Europe under nuclear conditions. The mass armies theme has not been dropped, however, and at least one leading military spokesman has recently

*Unlike Khrushchev's December 1963 and February 1964 manpower and budget cut formulas, Kosygin did not mention the East European forces in the context of his reduced defense expenditure proposals on 9 and 11 December 1964 at the Supreme Soviet.

**Marshal Sokolovsky at a press conference on February 17, 1965 gave 2.423 million as the numerical strength of the Soviet Armed Forces. (TASS and Moscow radio, 17 February 1965.)

asserted that superiority in manpower is a consideration for any kind of war. Malinovsky stated at a 14 May 1965 speech at a Moscow meeting celebrating the 10th anniversary of the pact that: "Irrespective of whether war is to be waged with the use of nuclear weapons or without them, we are convinced that the superiority in manpower and material will be on our side."

The solution of the long-standing debate on the nature of a future European war will have important implications for the future missions and force structure of the East European armies, and the Soviet forces stationed in East Europe. If, for example, the Soviet leadership raises its assessment of the reliability of the modernized allied forces and/or adopts a Khrushchevian view of nuclear war in Europe, then a substantial redeployment of Soviet forces from East Europe would be a logical military move. In this connection, it may be significant that the newly appointed commander of the Soviet troops in East Germany, General Koshevoy, expressed certain Khrushchevian views at a time when the "mass armies" theme was most loudly proclaimed by the Soviet high command. General Koshevoy wrote two days after Khrushchev announced, with little enthusiasm, the suspension of his 1960 troop and budget cut proposal) that "due to the high effectiveness of the nuclear-missile weapon, a front can now fulfill its tasks in an offensive operation with a greatly reduced number of forces and conventioanl fire means." A greatly reduced number of Soviet forces was

announced by Marshal Sokolovsky within a few weeks of Koshevoy's GSFG appointment. And in his 17 February announcement, Sokolovsky--immediately after reiterating the standard Soviet threat of undisclosed countermeasures to possible NATO nuclear sharing proposals--asserted that "we shall gladly withdraw our troops from the territory of Hungary, Poland, and the GDR if the Western powers announce their intention to follow our example."* Finally, it may be significant that the common Soviet formulation of countermeasures to NATO nuclear plans has, on at least one public occasion, not been couched in purposefully vague language. Pact commander Grechko at a 14 May Kremlin reception this year made the unprecedented public mention of "the joint nuclear** force of the Warsaw Pact." While such a force (if it actually exists) would most likely be tightly controlled by the Soviets, the fact that joint nuclear efforts have been given a somewhat more specific form, plus the fact that the January 1965 pact meeting was allegedly called to discuss measures against the formation of a NATO multilateral nuclear force, may suggest that an even greater Soviet nuclear commitment to defend East Europe represents an effort to lay the foundation (or in this case, a strengthened "nuclear shield") for future Soviet troop withdrawals. Or as

*In his unusual 4 June "rebuttal" of Sokolovsky's 17 February manpower figure, Rotmistrov reportedly added that Europe was a hostage to Soviet land forces and thus it was foolish to think that the Soviet ground forces in Europe would be reduced. Rotmistrov, in a vein somewhat similar to that of Malinovsky's 14 May remark (cited earlier), commented that the Soviet Union was a continental power with the capability of taking Europe in 60-90 days, with or without nuclear weapons.

**The word "nuclear" appeared in both the TASS English and Russian accounts of Grechko's remarks; curiously, the Russian word for "armed"--rather than "nuclear"--appeared in Red Star's version of Grechko's remark.

General Koshevoy reasoned in 1961, the Soviet rocket-nuclear effort will mitigate the need for the large Soviet conventional force. At any rate, we have no concrete evidence of Soviet troop redeployment from East Europe since Khrushchev's ouster.

Meanwhile, the satellite modernization program has rapidly advanced. The earlier "temporary" aspect of the pact offensive modernization effort has apparently given way to a reequipment policy bearing the marks of a more nearly "permanent" nature. And generally unlike the pre-1961 policy, now in most instances when modern Soviet tactical weaponry becomes available in the Soviet Union, pact national forces receive the Soviet improvements in the same time period. In addition to the continuing modernization policy, certain indications of an elevated status for the pact have emerged. For example, Marshal Grechko at the 1965 pact consultative meeting was identified by TASS (19 January) as the "Supreme Commander of the Joint Warsaw Pact Armed Forces"; at the last pact consultative meeting (July 1963) he was identified only as "commander in chief." In addition to his Warsaw Pact job, Grechko has apparently been given command of the Soviet Ground Forces. The East European press since the coup has on occasion referred to the "Joint Supreme Command" of the pact; earlier references referred to the "Joint Command."

While general continuity in pact military developments has been registered in the post coup period, several signs of what may be a growing East European voice in pact policy-making have marked the affairs of the pact. To list a few unprecedented developments, the January meeting was not used by Moscow as a forum for the presentation of Soviet policy, it was not even called by Moscow (Kosygin openly stated that the meeting was held at Ulbricht's insistence), and the 20 January pact communique did not list the delegations attending the meeting (thus for the first time leaving open the question of who actually signed the document). And since the fall of Khrushchev signs of Rumania's apparently declining interest in pact membership have been aired with some frequency.

With the possible exception of Rumania, a nation left plainly outside the pact's "first strategic echelon" (a term recently coined by Czech and GDR military spokesmen that seems to follow the 1963 "Quartet" concept), the slackening of political ties within the pact in the past few years has had surprisingly little effect on policy relating to purely military affairs. And strategic planning on the European war, as we pointed out earlier, has remained an almost exclusive Soviet prerogative throughout the ten years of the pact's existence, even though the non-Soviet forces have grown from weak, poorly-equipped-and-organized home defense units to highly-trained, modernized and streamlined military forces. Today, this prerogative--perhaps the last policy domain to be dominated by the Soviets in East Europe--may be moving from the closed control of the Soviet planners to the more open tables of Warsaw Pact councils. In short, what may be Moscow's loosening grip in military planning might be a somewhat belated reflection of Moscow's earlier diminution of political and economic dominance in East Europe. However, we cannot judge the extent of the rumblings of East European influence on pact military policy-making. It seems reasonable to assume that should the characteristic lack of direction from the new Kremlin leadership drag on, and particularly should the new leadership fail to bring forward a comprehensive military strategy, the well-armed East European nations may well have an opportunity to shape pact strategy--and thus to convert the pact into a conventional military alliance.